FROM BEING PUMPED TO PUMPING ENDLESSLY

Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering the Infamous Fourth Trimester

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From Being Pumped to Pumping Endlessly: Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering the Infamous Fourth Trimester

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This pocketbook is a reflection of a first-time mother's journey through the beautiful mess that is early motherhood. Every story shared here comes from personal experience and heartfelt memory. Any resemblance to actual persons or events is coincidental or purely inspired by life as it happened.

Disclaimer: This pocketbook is intended for informational and reflective purposes only. It does not constitute medical advice or professional guidance. Always consult your doctor, pediatrician, or qualified healthcare provider regarding any questions or concerns you may have about your health or your baby's wellbeing.

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My Radhe - the reason this pocketbook exists

My Mother, Smt Lalitha Srinivasan - my first Guru

My Guru, Smt Vishakha Hariji - my eternal Mother

And all the mothers out there - new, seasoned and to-be

Preface

In this information-overloaded world, is there a *dearth* of postpartum books? *Nope*.

Is social media not giving us enough reels and free advice on postpartum and baby goals? *Hell yes*.

So then, *why this additional pocketbook*, you may ask?

As a new mother of a late-term, underweight baby, postpartum hit me like a freight train. The initial months were rough - not *"I-need-a-nap"* rough, but *"am-I-even-alive?"* rough. Almost every other day during those first three months, I found myself thinking, *"Why didn't anyone tell me this before?!"*

So, doing what any other person from a consulting world would do, I decided to write a pocketbook documenting my experience of surviving the **first 90 days of motherhood.**

Let me just say this: nothing - and I mean *nothing* - could have prepared me for what came after the baby arrived.

I read the blogs, attended the webinars (even took notes), packed the hospital bag. I was pumped - emotionally, mentally, even physically. But somewhere between the happy tears in the delivery room and the
3 AM cry-fests *(mine, not just the baby's)*, reality hit like a leaky diaper in a white onesie.

This pocketbook isn't a manual. It's not even a *"how-to."* Think of it more like a **survival log** - part diary, part therapy, mostly *"Why did no one tell me this?!"*

What you'll find here are stories, rants, confessions, and light-bulb moments from the first three months postpartum - the kind of stuff I wish someone had handed me along with a warm hug when I came home from the hospital.

These are the moments *in between the feeds and the freak-outs* - the messy, raw, confusing bits.

If you're pregnant, freshly postpartum, or just curious - *welcome*.

Here's everything I wish someone had said out loud before I found myself Googling, *"How long can a human survive on 47 minutes of sleep?"*

Disclaimer: This isn't a medical advice. The entire pocketbook is written based on personal experience.

Congratulations, You're a Mom!
(Now here's the chaos)

It was around 7:15 PM on a Saturday**.** After a short walk, I waddled back home with my pot belly and sat down, panting.

Then, I heard a *"pop."*

At first, I thought I'd lost control over my bladder and rushed to the bathroom. *Nope*. It was the **holy water break.** I wasn't ready to accept it. I mean, my due date was 20 days later. We hadn't even finalized the baby's name yet!

Cut to the hospital. It was 8:30 PM**.** The nurses told me I was in week 36 - apparently that's considered *"late preterm"* (fancy word for *still kind of early*). They said they'd wait four more days for the baby to reach week 37 before inducing, *if needed*. Meanwhile, they informed my gynecologist about what was happening.

Fast forward to 11:30 PM.

"**Congratulations, it's a baby girl,**" said the duty doctor.

A minute later, my gynec walks in and says,
"I saw your name and thought you wouldn't be here for another three weeks!"

Me too, doc. Me too.

There was absolutely no time to even ask myself, *"What just happened?"*

You might be thinking, *"Wow, what a smooth birth story."*

Well… this is where things start to get real.

- *What's the baby's weight? Not even 2.5 kg?*
- *Why does she look so thin?*
- *Why did she come early?*
- *Why are you shaking so much?*

The night after birth was filled with such questions - and more.

What a great start to motherhood, right?

At least the baby was sleeping through the night, so that's a win.

(That's what I thought - before the chaos hit.)

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before

- Babies come when they want to. You *don't* get a say in the schedule - no matter how many apps you track.
- Preterm babies often weigh less because they gain a lot in the final few weeks. It's not because you didn't eat enough during pregnancy. So, *stop* blaming yourself.
- You might not feel an *emotional explosion* when you first hold your baby. You're exhausted, possibly in pain, and probably just trying to figure out if your organs are still where they should be.
- It's completely normal to shake uncontrollably after birth. It's just your body processing the trauma and exhaustion. You're *not* freezing - you're in recovery mode.

- At the earliest, ask to see a lactation nurse. Learn how to *actually* breastfeed - latch techniques, positions, the whole deal. It'll save you a lot of stress (*and sore feelings*) later. You'll know why I say this in the next chapter.

If Labour Pain Was Exhausting, Wait Till You Start Breastfeeding

“Breastfeeding is a beautiful, natural process that brings comfort to both mother and baby,” - *said someone on the internet.*

As soothing as it may sound, that was *definitely not* my case.

My baby was born almost three weeks early**,** which meant both our bodies were still playing catch-up, wondering why we were doing things ahead of schedule. And that, of course, meant delayed milk production, latch struggles, and a *not-so-fun* drop on the baby weight curve.

The thing with preterm babies is they often have trouble latching. *Why*? Because they came out before finishing the chapter titled *“How to Drink Milk Like a Pro.”*

Here’s the catch: babies gain weight through breastfeeding - *but* to breastfeed well, they need to have enough strength and weight for their jaw to work properly.

Welcome to the Vicious Cycle Olympics.

“Wake the baby every 2 hours and feed them,” the doctor would say. But nobody tells you preterm babies can sleep through their hunger. Nobody tells you how hard it is to wake a baby who is absolutely uninterested in this whole *“outside world”* concept.

Then came the next golden advice:
“Why don’t you start pumping? It’ll help increase your milk supply. Plus, someone else can feed the baby and you can rest.”

Rest? Of course!

Let's be clear - even if someone else is feeding the baby, it's still *you* who has to pump the milk. There is no magical rest window appearing out of thin air.

And pumping… oh my freaking god! Pumping is such a laborious task that at one point, I started thinking breastfeeding was actually easier.

First, you go on a hunt for the right flange size (*which sounds like a plumbing issue - worse than that*). Then, you sit and coax milk into bottles, store it, warm it before feeding, and hope your baby doesn't spit it right back at you.

Let's not even start on sterilization - it deserves its own full chapter (or a separate rant). It's a full-time job.

After all this trouble you start pumping, the next hit comes once you look at the quantity of pumped milk. God forbid someone gets to see it and comment, "*Oh, only so little after pumping this long*?", control your urge to throw the pumped milk on their face.

That's way too much precious to be wasted. It is more than enough if your body is making the right quantity of milk for your baby. We don't have to make liters of milk like a cow!

Of course, this chapter wouldn't be complete without talking about **formula.**

The first few weeks – my baby survived *only* on formula. There were a lot of nights soaked in self-doubt and guilt over giving formula. Reading internet forums at 2 AM only made it worse -

because apparently, there's an entire corner of the web dedicated to making formula moms feel like failures.

Then, a friend said something that shifted my perspective. She told me to look at formula as a **supporting drink, not a rival** to breastmilk. *15ml or 30ml or 60ml - mother's milk is mother's milk*. There's no *"this or nothing"* - it can also be *"this and that."*

This whole topic took a serious toll on my mental health.

I talked - a lot - to friends and cousins who were fellow mothers, which helped me get out of my head and gain some perspective. They had been through the chaos and were able to lend a non-judgmental ear every time I needed to vent.

Did all that magically remove my guilt? *Of course not.* But it helped. Even if just a little. And sometimes, a little is enough to make it through the day.

It was only when I spoke to a few people, I realized a lot of them did use formula for their babies - and they turned out to be just fine. The internet has made this topic fearmongering, creating way too much panic than necessary.

Of course, if you can breastfeed, there's *absolutely* nothing like it. But for those who have challenges - or, as in my case, when your body needs time - *formula comes to the rescue* without letting your baby starve.

And here's something else I learnt (the hard way): There is no magical food that will skyrocket your milk supply overnight.

As my lactation consultant said - *milk production works on a supply-and-demand basis*. The more your baby drinks, the more your body produces. Sure, food plays a role, but instead of

obsessing over what to eat or not eat, it's better to just focus on frequent feeding. That does the real trick.

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before:

- Breastfeeding doesn't come naturally to everyone. *It's a skill - you can learn it, practice it, and eventually feel comfortable*.
- Stress and breastfeeding don't mix well. Your body might be doing its job *just fine*, but for the milk to be *let-down,* it needs a calm mind. The more you stress, the tougher it gets. So if it's taking time, breathe - it will happen.
- Formula is NOT failure**.** Just because you start with formula doesn't mean it's forever. Your breastmilk *will* come in. Hang in there.
- ***Fed is best*** - whether it's formula, breastmilk, or both. This is not a *YOU* problem. It's just how some bodies work. And that's completely OK.
- Most importantly, you are not alone**.** Talk it out - you'll often realize you're being way too hard on yourself.
- And yes, it's 100% normal to want your baby to drink quickly and fall asleep, just so you can go pee or close your eyes for 10 minutes. *No shame in that!*

The Baby's Weight Chart: My New Performance Appraisal

As a mother of an underweight, preterm baby, I've never been more obsessed with someone else's weight gain in my life. It took us close to 20 days just to get back to the birth weight. Worse - in the first two weeks, she lost more than she gained. You can imagine the obsession now.

Coming from a family of "*plumpy*" babies, we couldn't wrap our heads around the idea that babies could actually be lean. It felt like a personal failure. I mean, how could my baby not be chubby? So, the new household mission (*apart from keeping the baby alive*) was simple - make her gain weight.

We got a baby weighing scale, tracked every feed, every minute, every drop, and even my food intake - because apparently everything I ate could decide her destiny. We made a *detailed chart* of her incremental weight gain till she turned one. If only it were that easy.

One upside of a combo-fed baby is that the mix of formula and breastfeeding usually helps accelerate weight gain. Just when things seemed to be going great, it was time for vaccination. After the vaccination came the tears, the formula strikes, and a weight gain graph that barely inched upward - much like my confidence.

In my head, baby's weight gain = how much milk my body produces. My confidence was directly tied to that number. Each week, when we checked her weight, it felt like a mini performance appraisal - except this time, my boss couldn't talk, but could definitely cry.

Once she stopped formula and was exclusively breastfed, I realised all this pressure I was putting on myself was doing no one any good. My body was already working overtime to make milk - the last thing it needed was me hovering around with a chart and a complex.

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before:

- Don't obsess over the exact number of grams your baby gains each week. Social media baby comparisons are a trap. If your paediatrician says your baby's growth is on track, you're doing just fine. They studied this for years - *trust them*.
- Just like adults, babies come in all shapes and sizes. Some are adorably squishy; others are strong and lean by baby standards. Healthy baby > chubby baby (*though the chubby baby in me still protests while writing this*).
- Weight gain *doesn't* always happen in neat, weekly progressions. Some weeks they'll gain more, some weeks less - and that's normal. Babies aren't stock market graphs; they don't rise in predictable lines.
- If your baby is active, feeding well, and meeting milestones, that's a *far better* measure of health than any weighing scale.
- And finally - your worth as a mother has *nothing* to do with the numbers on that chart. The love, patience, and effort you pour in are immeasurable - even if the weighing scale doesn't always show it.

Sleep When the Baby Sleeps - and Other Such Jokes

The only night I slept through peacefully was the night I gave birth. The baby was calm, we reached the room around 1:00 a.m., lights off - everyone slept happily.

From the next night, though, came the real *nightmare*.

The baby would sleep through the day, *barely* feeding, and then wake up at night with hunger, screaming her lungs out until midnight. Those were the nights when formula truly felt like a *lifesaver*.

Once we got back home, things only got worse. The same pattern continued - peaceful naps all day, and the screaming symphony starting sharp at 8:00 p.m. Nights were filled with rounds of screaming (*from both baby and caregivers*), buckets of sweat, and heaps of exhaustion.

We had to wake her every 2–3 hours for feeds. That, in itself, was a mammoth task.

Gently tickle the toes.

Undress her.

Change the diaper.

Caress the earlobe.

These were the general ways to wake a baby. *None* of it worked. Ours was a sound sleeper in every sense of the word.

And if, by some miracle, she *did* wake up, she'd feed for about 10 minutes before drifting off again. Then came round two - offering formula or expressed milk - which meant another round of wake-up theatrics. While she took the formula, I'd pump milk for the next feed.

Once she finally fell asleep, I'd clean and sanitize the pump parts, get everything ready for the next round. By the time this feeding circus was over, two hours would've flown by - leaving exactly one hour before the next shift began.

Now you may ask, "*Why not sleep when the baby sleeps during the day?"*

Well, my amazing child would sleep only *on* me during the day, and the second I put her down - she'd wake up screaming. It is better to sit down with a silent baby then lie down with a screaming one.

While it's adorable to maintain a baby milestone journal, it's definitely not fun to maintain a *sleep-wake-feed* journal. Yet that's exactly what we did - meticulously logging every wake-up, feed, and nap, calculating the next feeding time like analysts on a corporate dashboard. We kept at it for almost two months, before we finally gave up.

Between all this - *occasional eating, hasty showers, and general surviving* - the maximum sleep I got most days in the first month, was 4 to 5 hours. And let me tell you, sleep deprivation can mess with your mind in more ways than you can imagine. *Forgetfulness, fatigue, feeling annoyed, and even weight gain* - all part of the postpartum *bonus* package.

But hey, who knew you could still remain borderline sane on 4–5 hours of sleep while nursing a human, managing family chaos, and trying to keep yourself alive? But, g*oodbye, mental health*.

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before:

- Don't fight the chaos - work with it. It's okay if you can't sleep when the baby sleeps. It's not *always* possible. Just lie down whenever you can, close your eyes, and rest - even a few quiet minutes can make a *huge* difference.
- If you find yourself anxious at bedtime - afraid to fall asleep only to be jolted awake by a screaming baby - that's perfectly normal. Your body will eventually adapt to the frequent wakeups and learn to make the best use of those short sleep cycles.
- If your baby is anything like mine - the kind who loves nibbling forever and refuses to leave your lap - set up a comfortable space. Use plenty of pillows to support your back, neck, and hips. You'll thank yourself later.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of water throughout the day - it genuinely helps with fatigue. You'll also get to get some steps count with the bathroom visits.
- Divide the night shifts if possible. Even a short stretch of uninterrupted sleep - two or three hours - can feel like luxury. Trade off additional feeds, diaper changes, or soothing duties with your family whenever you can.

New Me, Who Dis?
Was I Thinner During Pregnancy Than Now?

I genuinely believed the pregnancy belly would naturally vanish within a week or so after giving birth - you know, just like those Instagram reels and social media *"after"* posts made it seem.

Spoiler alert: *it didn't*.

Worse, I felt like I had gotten bigger after delivery.

No one warned me that the stress of the first few weeks could show up so visibly - puffier face, swollen limbs, and a confidence level that had taken a nosedive.

I even told some friends who wanted to visit the baby, *"Give it three months,"* hoping that I'd be back in shape by then.

Plot twist: *I didn't*.

The loose t-shirts and pants I wore during pregnancy? Now they don't even fit. That's when it hit me - I was *still* gaining weight.

Apparently, the breastfeeding mantra of *"eat more to make more milk"* wasn't translating into the baby gaining weight... it was just me. The hopes of fitting into pre-pregnancy clothes were slowly fading. I mean, who wants to part ways with an entire wardrobe?

And don't even get me started on nighties. I live in them now - and as someone who absolutely hates wearing them, it feels like a cruel joke. What's supposed to make you feel comfortable is actually making me feel like I've lost my identity.

Now, let's talk about *shame and self-judgement*.

I still look at a photo of my mom from her postpartum days and feel… *awful*. She looked so put together, and I - well, I look like a hot mess (*just that only my temperament is hot*).

That lingering fear - *"What if I never get back to how I looked before?"* - is still very much alive.

Also, those videos on social media that claim, *"How I lost my pregnancy belly in 3 months"* - I honestly don't know how to feel about them. How is it that easy for some people to shed weight, while all I've lost in the past 3 months is my *sanity and sleep?*

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before:

- Your body took nine months to grow a human. It deserves at least that much time - *if not more* - to heal. Also, there's no *"going back"* to your pre-baby body. A baby literally came out of you. The anatomy has changed. You need to accept that.
- Don't compare your journey with someone else's highlight reel. Each body is different. Yours has been through a war, and it shows up in ways no one warns you about.
- Buy new clothes that fit your current body instead of squeezing into old ones and spiraling into shame. *Comfort over nostalgia*. This can also be a gentle motivation to get back in shape (*someday*).
- There are going to be comments like "*why don't you start walking on the treadmill, have a watch on food intake, start with your exercises already"*. Let them slide! Do whatever that makes you feel comfortable – start at *your* own pace.

- Also, say *hello* to a delightful variety of physical companions: back pain, bum ache, knee pain (*and yes, specifically knuckle pain*). This delightful combo can vary based on your breastfeeding position. What a *unique gift!*
- There's also something called "*Mommy's Wrist*" - and yes, it's a thing. You might experience sharp pain in your wrists from constantly holding the baby's head during breastfeeding sessions. No one talks about it, *but* it's real.

I Hate Human Beings and Pretty Much Everything

Let's consider a few cases before you judge me for this dramatic title:

There were times in life when I used the phrase *"emotional roller coaster."* I'd like to formally apologize to those moments - because nothing, *nothing*, compares to the emotional chaos that postpartum brings. Literally *anything* could make me cry.

- The baby not latching? *Tears*.
- Being served a vegetable I didn't like for lunch? *Full-blown meltdown*.
- One time, my cousin sent me a lullaby playlist for the baby. Guess who bawled their eyes out listening to it? No, not the baby. *Me*.

Apparently, when you give birth, your *estrogen levels drop* (*that's the hormone that regulates your body temperature*). And then, when you breastfeed, another hormone called *prolactin* comes in and plays bully - it messes with estrogen and triggers increased body temperature.

Long story short: *sweat. Profuse, relentless sweat.* Not your regular *"oh it's a bit warm"* sweat. This was *"did I just run a marathon?"* sweat.
After every feed, I'd have to step out of the room just to blast the fan at full speed and cool off. And *no*, you can't keep the baby's room cooler because - guess what - preterm babies need to be kept warm, even if your insides feel like they're melting.

After we got back from the hospital, the baby and I were given a room. And we basically *lived in it*. Food and water were brought in. Essentials delivered to the door. I barely stepped out. That room became my *entire* world - me, my sleeping baby, and the digital realm of memes and mom jokes.

There was so much pent-up frustration, and the slightest comment or question from the family would set me off. There were some understanding that it was the hormones doing, there were also multiple *soap opera* moments.

Each time, I kept telling myself it was going to get better tomorrow. What I didn't realize at the time was how the *lack of sunlight, movement, and real human interaction* can mess with your mind so much.

Now, let's talk about *household chaos*. One of my personal pet peeves is *mess*. Clothes tossed anywhere but the clothes rack, dusty windowpanes, cartons lying around the house, empty packets carefully saved instead of being thrown away, clutter everywhere - *you get the drift*.

Pre-baby me would have handled it with a cold stare and quick action. Post-baby me? I could barely get out of bed. I had to just lie there and accept that this was how the house was going to look for a while. And honestly, that was *more painful than the healing episiotomy*.

It's wild how your body treats you like royalty during pregnancy - glowing skin, thicker hair - and the moment the baby is out? *Boom*. You're just a sweaty, hormonal milk machine. The good things go out with the baby. Your sweat glands don't even work properly anymore. And *you*? You're just... there, barely existing, snapping at anything and everything.

What can all of this do to a person, if not make them *insufferable?*

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before:

- There will be times when you *only* want the baby with you. You'll feel irrationally protective. That's normal. It's not YOU - it's *prolactin***.** It creates a kind of *lactating aggression*. Wild, but real.
- Science seriously messes with your body post-birth. Hormones will absolutely clown you. The way you feel - angry, anxious, weepy - it's not just emotional, it's *chemical*. It's not YOU. It's your temporarily hijacked body.
- You can be surrounded by people and still feel completely *alone* - especially during those quiet, late-night feeds. That's because, in that moment, it's just you and your baby. It's a bond *and* a burden. It's beautiful and isolating, all at once.
- Stay away from things that manipulatively makes you feel like you have to *behave well* at all times despite the whirlwind of changes you are going through. That's not needed at the moment, let it go and it can be one less stress aspect in your life.
- The baby needs their mom - no doubt about that. But the mom also needs *her* mother. You're doing this for the first time, and it's completely okay to want your mom with you for everything. Don't let anyone make you feel otherwise.
- Remember, *none of these lasts forever*. Even though it feels like eternity, it will pass. Things will either get better - or you'll get better at handling them. *Both* are wins.

- Also, the world does *not* end if the house is a mess. You can learn to ignore it. You can come back to it later. You can ask for help. Right now, the *only* priority is the screaming newborn. Let the dust settle on its own - *literally*.

Coping (Surviving) Mechanisms

There were days I desperately wished I had a *Time Machine* - just to fast forward six months into the future, hoping this whirlwind of feelings would be gone.

Birthing a cute baby? *Beautiful*. Grateful for it, *no doubt*.
What follows? *Not so much*.

- Crying (*mostly screaming*) baby.
- Latching struggles.
- Searing pain from feeding marathons because you've been sitting for hours.
- Back ache. Knee pain. Bum ache. Wrist pain.
- Drowning in guilt every time you reach for formula.
- Sleep? *What's that?*
- No choice to eat what you want.
- A body that's still trying to heal.
- A mind that's ready to scream but doesn't have the energy.
- The sense of being stuck in a blurry, loopy timelapse.
- An alternate universe with no exit pass.

That was my *first month after giving birth* - just a chaotic, unfiltered montage of trying to stay alive - me and the baby - without either of us completely losing it.

The only people I spoke to were those who made me feel safe - the ones who didn't try to *"fix"* it but simply listened. Who didn't

interrupt with advice but instead said, *“Yes, it sucks. And yes, it will get better. For sure.”*

But eventually - just like everyone said - it did feel like things were getting better.
Or maybe… I just got better at dealing with the madness.

Never underestimate the healing power of fellow mothers: Whether it was venting voice notes or exchanging new mom reels, even just seeing someone else go through what I was feeling made me realize - *okay, I’m not completely alone in this*.

So many friends and cousins who had been through this before, checked in often, just to make sure I’m not overthinking or spiraling inside my own head. If I got through those days with even a shred of sanity, it’s because of people like them.

From Month 2, as weird as it sounds, *reels really helped*.
Yes, *unapologetically* - I was on Instagram scrolling through cats doing karate and people making five-ingredient brownies at 2 AM. And honestly? That helped take my mind off overthinking.

Beyond the cats and dogs, there was also a lot of *practical* info for newborns. Did you know you can apply for an Aadhaar card for your baby right from the comfort of your home? An official *actually* comes over to take the baby’s photo and details, and the card gets delivered to your doorstep. At least that’s how it works under the Karnataka government (*and no - this isn’t a government promo*!)

Over these three months, the one thing that brought me constant peace and hope was *spirituality*. It helped me zoom out of the daily madness and see life from a wider lens - reminding me that I’m just a *tiny speck* in this vast universe, and that what feels

overwhelming today is just a passing moment in the grand scheme of things. I listened *to harikathas, upanyasams, podcasts, and music* - all of which offered comfort, perspective, and calm. Strangely, they seemed to soothe the baby too. Or at least, that's what I liked to believe every time she drifted off to sleep listening to them.

Now, as we approach the four-month mark**,** I've even picked up some daily challenge games on LinkedIn (*yes, they have games as well - not just free advice and an ever-flourishing job market)* and, of course, started documenting this journey.
Because a girl's gotta do something when a tiny human is glued to her 24/7.

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before:

- Find something that lets you *disconnect from the chaos* - and do it every day. Anything that helps you get out of your own head is worth it. No judgment, no shame.
- Taking a five-minute break to step away from your baby - to breathe, drink water, *pee your heart out* - is totally okay. That doesn't make you selfish. It makes you *human*.
- Month 1 is the hardest. You and your baby are both new to this. You're learning from each other, and it takes time.
- By mid-Month 2 (give or take), things *do* start falling into place. You'll figure it out together. Hang in there.
- If it feels like your family doesn't "*get*" you - that's okay too. They're also trying to understand. In the meantime, find your comfort person or space. It makes a huge difference.

The New Forever

If you've made it this far, let me assure you - the **cribbing and venting is done.**

So far, I've probably made postpartum sound like pure torture - just endless crying, sleepless nights, and emotional chaos. But somewhere hidden inside all that mess are **tiny, beautiful moments.** The kind you can miss if you're too sleep-deprived or stressed out to notice.

I'm grateful - a lot of people told me to slow down and **cherish those fleeting bits**, even in the middle of madness.

Here are all the things I *wish someone told me before, some of which I was (thankfully) told:*

Not all Instagram posts are overhyped. I once read:
"The house can wait to be cleaned. The clothes can wait to be folded. Chores can wait. Babies don't stay this small forever."
I felt that line hit me every single time I stressed about a messy house or unorganized laundry. And honestly, it helped me shift focus back to the baby (*and away from the mess*).

Document everything. Take pictures. Record videos. Write journals. Buy those cheesy milestone books if you're into them. Do whatever speaks to you. I promise, months from now, you'll be so glad you captured these moments - and your baby will thank you someday too.

Every time I get annoyed that she isn't feeding or sleeping, I look at her and think, *"How did this ridiculously cute thing come out of me?"* The annoyance melts into a puddle and I end up smiling (for

a while, at least). Those tiny fingers, toothless grins, restless eyes, baby frowns - **what a tiny, magical package.**

Breastfeeding is a long-term journey. The early days are hard, but it will get better. You'll find your rhythm, or a workaround. Either way, your baby will be fed - and *that's what matters*.

"Is my milk enough?" You (and probably others) will ask this a lot. What I've learned so far: if the baby's full, they let go. If they're still on you forever, maybe it's comfort, maybe hunger. Try offering more milk. If they take it, they needed it. If not, they just wanted mama cuddles. It's a *test-and-learn* game.

Vaccinations are bittersweet. Necessary, *yes*. But in our case, even the so-called *"painless"* ones caused thigh pain, irritation, and made diaper changes feel like a horror movie. Also, remember those reels where the mom cries more than the baby during the shot? That's true to happen, *be prepared*.

Colic is real. And it doesn't send a warning. Around weeks 6–8, they hit hard. The baby screams are next-level - different from the usual cries. We made the mistake of waiting for the cry before giving colic drops, and the neighbours dropped in asking if the baby was fine - *you can imagine the intensity*. If your doctor says give it three times a day - *just do it*. Don't be like us.

Take one day at a time. Actually, some days, even just one hour at a time works. Babies have their own moods and phases, and no one - not even they - knows what's going on in their little heads. It's not your fault. They're just unpredictable, adorable, tiny *tornadoes*.

Firsts are everything.

- The first time they look at you and smile.
- The first time they grip your finger.
- The first time they respond to your voice.
- The first sleepy smile.
- The first dramatic face they make at you.

These **90 days are packed with firsts** - quiet, magical, blink-and-you-miss-them moments. Cherish them. They don't come back.

It's been three months, and I've tried to document this journey as honestly as I could.

Have I seen and learned everything? *Absolutely not.*
Will things stay like this forever? *Definitely not.*
Am I fully confident in this parenting role? *Still shaking at the thought of my mom going back home and me having to do all this solo. So, no.*

But I do know this much - **parenting is a lifelong learning curve.** There's no one-size-fits-all rulebook. You try things. Some work, some don't. You learn and move on.

I've signed up for a *lifetime subscription* of learning, loving, growing, and sharing life with a tiny piece of my heart that now lives outside my body.
And I'm honestly looking forward to every bit of it - *chaos and all.*

Reflections

If you've made it this far, I hope this little pocketbook felt like a conversation with a friend**.** I hope it made you feel a little *less alone*, a little *more seen*.

Just knowing what to expect can help you accept the change - that's what I've learned. I knew labor would be painful - and *prepping my mind for it* helped me get through it.

But no one told me postpartum would feel this *lonely*. That I'd cry without knowing why. That I'd sometimes feel *isolated*, even with people around. That I'd feel insecure, intolerant, and fragile - like I was cracking at the edges.

I hope you don't feel that way.

But if you do - know that you are **not alone**. And more importantly: this is **temporary**. Things will change - and they'll change for the better.

This was just about the first 90 days**.** What about the next 90?

Well… we'll see.

Whether that becomes another pocketbook depends on three things: *Time*. *Energy levels*. *And the baby's cooperation*.

Until then, I'm wishing you a lot of:

Love.

Toothless giggles.

Drooly smiles. And the kind of *poopy faces* that somehow still make your heart melt.

So, you've packed your hospital bag, bookmarked baby name lists, and maybe even practiced breathing techniques. But what about the next part — the one that doesn't come with a manual, a warning label, or even a good night's sleep?

Welcome to the Fourth Trimester :
Where your baby is crying, your body is confused, your T-shirts don't fit, and no one told you feeding the baby might feel like a part-time job and a full-blown identity crisis.

This isn't a *parenting guide*. It's a pocket-sized survival log, written during 3AM feeds, fueled by zero sleep and lots of protein bars.

In under 30 minutes (*yes, that's all it takes*), this book will walk you through the real stuff — the leaky, lonely, laugh-out-loud parts of early motherhood no one warns you about.

Whether you're sitting in a waiting room for your next scan, stuck in traffic on the way to the hospital, or talking a walk looking at your phone, this book will make you - laugh, nod in furious agreement, and make you feel a little more seen.

Because, someone should've told you about the infamous fourth trimester. And now, *someone has*!